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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

The Natural History Museum, Florence.—Florence, magnificently rich in works of art, is by no means poor in scientific collections, since among its public museums are included not only a splendid archæological one in the Via Colorura, well provided with Egyptian curiosities, and containing what is probably the most complete collection of Etruscan remains to be found in Italy or in the world, but also a Musia di Storia Naturale, attached to a school founded by Victor Emmanuele for instruction in the Natural Sciences.

The last-named museum is strongest in a point which is one of the weakest in all our American museums—in anatomical preparations in wax, representing the leading features in animal structure from the infusoria to man. In other respects this museum, though well arranged and tolerably complete, has no very salient features. The articulates have several small rooms, none too well lighted; the stuffed mammals are not very prominent; birds and their nests fill a large, well-lighted hall; fishes and reptiles occupy two halls and a gallery; but the interest for one accustomed to such collections commences with the osteological specimens, and culminates with the extensive series of preparations exhibiting the soft parts.

After leaving the purely osteological section, the visitor reaches that devoted to the lower animals—if it is now allowable for any man to declare that the human species, with all its long history of culture and inheritance of intelligence, is superior to creatures the highest of which resemble him in bone and muscle. Prominent among the animal preparations are exceedingly large scale models of the radulæ of various gastropods, models of Lumbricus, Hirudo, and other worms, showing the internal structure; magnified infusoria, with sections of the same; a very complete set of the anatomy of the torpedo, especially of the electric organs; sectional models of sharks and bony fishes; a set showing the anatomy of the common fowl, male and female, the growth of the egg in the ovary and uterus, and its development into a chick; the anatomy of the cat, male and female; and that of the sheep.

The most complete portion of the collection of models is, however, that relating to human anatomy. The osteology, the splanchology, the digestive, circulatory, respiratory, lymphatic and generative systems are here exhibited in the fullest manner possible without actual dissection; and every organ connected with each of these systems is treated to several models, representing it in various positions or in various states. The nervous system is, if possible, exemplified even more fully than the others. In each room complete figures, some erect, others recumbent, show the general appearance of the system of organs to which the room is devoted; while all around, in table cases, are placed a double series of models of the separate organs or parts. Thus around the hall devoted to the ligaments of the bones are grouped sections of the various articulations, while in the centre reposes a human figure with all articulations complete. Sections of the head at various levels, with vertical and partial sections, combined with others exposing portions of the face and neck, show the chief points of brain-structure, and the courses of the cranial nerves, including the various branches of the fifth, and Willis' accessory. Models of the arms, legs, back, pelvis, etc., show the limb and body muscles down to those of the various digits, the levator, ani, cremaster, etc. The muscles of jaws and face are shown in an extensive series of models. The general lymphatic system is exhibited by recumbent figures; the positions of the various viscera by several entire figures of both sexes, and many partial sections. The several senses are very thoroughly exemplified, as are many points of histological structure.

The entire museum, except one small private cabinet, is open free to both sexes and all ages every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, the authorities wisely judging that some knowledge of human structure is a proper and essential portion of the education of all young people. It is noticeable that young people, varying from mere children to twenty or twenty-five years of age, form the greater part of the visitors.—W. N. L.

Prizes to Biological Students.—From a desire to verify his own researches as to the causes of failing nutrition in aging organisms, the undersigned hereby offers three cash prizes of $175, $125 and $100 for the best three comparative demonstrations, by means of microscopical slides, of the blood capillaries in young and in aged tissues, canine or human.

By young tissues (canine) are meant tissues from animals between the ages of one and two years.

By aged tissues (canine) are meant tissues from animals not less than twelve years of age.

By young tissues (human) are meant tissues from subjects between the ages of ten and twenty years.

By aged tissues (human) are meant tissues from subjects not less than sixty-five years of age.

While a preference will be given to demonstrations from human tissues, it will be possible for work in canine tissues to take the first and, indeed, all of the prizes. But of two slides equally well done in all respects, one canine the other human, the latter will be given the preference. Canine tissues should be from large animals.

Twelve slides from young and twelve from aged tissues must be submitted by each competitor, together with a full description of the subjects, methods pursued, and every detail and circumstance which is likely to throw light upon, or account for any peculiarity. The slides are for comparison as to the condition of capillary circulation, the young with the old, and should be in numbered pairs, or groups from the same kind of tissue. The term tissue is used in a general sense, e. g., pulmonary tissue, hepatic tissue, renal tissue, osseous tissue, muscular tissue, nerve tissue, alimentary tissue, etc.

No particular schedule of methods for injection, or staining, will be insisted upon, and no more definite directions or explanations will be given.

The slides, carefully packed and boxed, together with descriptive manuscript, can be sent by mail.

It is stipulated that the demonstrations which receive the prizes, shall become the property of the subscriber, for publication. All others will be returned, if desired.

No pseudonyms required. Accompany slides, in every case, with (real) name and address. Unless of known reputation as a biologist, a reference is respectfully solicited.

Reservation: no reward will be made unless work of at least ordinary merit is submitted.

This offer is made on the first day of January, 1890, and will remain open until the twentieth day of August, 1890.

Slides and manuscript will be examined and receipted for as soon as received.

The prizes will be adjudged on the first day of October, 1890.

These nominal prizes are offered less in expectation of results from the money as an agent, than in the hope that the offer may furnish a *point d'appui* for really needed work. Besides professional observers and students, there are in the United States a large number of amateur microscopists of acute vision and undoubted talent, who are at present playing with microscopes, as with toys, merely to see curious or pretty things. The time has come to concentrate observation upon the one proper object of biology, viz., the renovation and prolongation of human life. Address C. A. STEPHENS' LABORATORY,

Norway Lake, Maine.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science will meet at Newcastle-on-Tyne, September 11-19, 1889. Prof. Flower is the general president, and the sections will have the following chairmen: Geology, Prof. James Geikie; biology, Prof. J. S. Burdon-Sanderson; geography, Colonel de Winton; anthropology, Sir W. Turner.

It is proposed to hold a Botanical Congress in Paris in the second half of August. The secretary of the committee of organization is M. P. Maury, 84 Rue de Grenelle, Paris. Among the subjects to be made prominent in the Congress is the Geographical Distribution of Plants.

Prof. Kinkenberg, of Jena, died in March. He was well-known for his researches on the physiology of the invertebrata.

Dr. James Beard, who has paid special attention to the development of the fish-like vertebrates, is to be associated with the Scottish Fishing Board.

Mr. J. Reynolds Vaizey, a young English botanist, whose publications have been in the line of the morphology of mosses, died recently at Cambridge, England, from injuries received from falling into a fire while in an epileptic fit.

Flora, the well-known German botanical journal, will hereafter be published at Marburg, under the editorship of Prof. Karl Gœbel.

Mr. Arthur E. Shipley has been appointed teacher of comparative anatomy for medical purposes in the University of Cambridge.

Dr. Heinrich Ernst Karl von Dechen, the well-known geologist, died at Borm, Germany, February 15th, 1889, aged 89 years.

The Rev. John G. Wood, the popular English author on natural history, died at Coventry, England, March 3d, 1889, in his sixty-second year.

The address of B. F. Lowne, as president of the Queckett Microscopical Club, is given in the Journal of the Club for April. It deals with the history of the morphology of insects.

Wassili Mkolaewitsch Ulianin, the well-known embryologist and professor of comparative anatomy and embryology in Warsaw, died February 5th, 1889, in his forty-ninth year.

The Legislature of Georgia has recently re-established the Geological Survey of the State. Prof. J. W. Spencer, of the State University, has been duly appointed to take charge of the work. Two assistants are authorized, besides the chemist and other specialists. Georgia has not been as derelict in its survey as appears, for in the forties a survey was organized. Again from 1876 to 1879, the survey was in progress, but the results have never been published. So this is the third survey.